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TITLE: Entertainment event ticket purchase and exchange system

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REPRESENTATIVE-FIGURES: 2

ABSTRACT:

An electronic ticket exchange system enables venue owners to sell tickets to patrons at a fair market value for each event, and patrons to more easily trade and transfer the tickets among one another after they have been purchased from the venue owner. Tickets for an event are initially offered to the public by the venue owner, using a market-making system. Patrons submit bids over a limited time period, for seats of different quality, and an initial price is established for

each quality of seat. A trading system provides for a secondary market in which patrons who have purchased tickets for an event can readily transfer them to other patrons, without requiring the services of a broker or the like. In this system, physical tickets are not required. Rather, all of the rights associated with a ticket, such as entry into the venue, parking privileges, designated seating, etc., are stored in an electronic form. An electronic venue entry control system verifies that a person owns an electronic ticket property right, and authorizes the privileges associated with the ticket, such as access to parking facilities, entry to the venue, purchase of concessions and/or merchandise, and the like. A seating system is employed to determine an optimal seating configuration based upon patron-specific preferences, after the initial sale of tickets and prior to entry into the venue. The specific assigned seats are indicated to the ticket holder at the time of entry. Patrons who regularly purchase tickets can join an organization associated with the ticket exchange system. All transactions carried out within the system can then be easily accomplished through a single membership number, which is permanent and unique to the member. Each such member can be provided with a suitable device which interfaces with the entry system to provide access to the venue, and parking if appropriate.

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TITLE: Entertainment event ticket purchase and exchange system

Abstract Paragraph:

An electronic ticket exchange system enables venue owners to sell tickets to patrons at a fair market value for each event, and patrons to more easily trade and transfer the tickets among one another after they have been purchased from the venue owner. Tickets for an event are initially offered to the public by the venue owner, using a market-making system. Patrons submit bids over a limited time period, for seats of different quality, and an initial price is established for each quality of seat. A trading system provides for a secondary market in which patrons who have purchased tickets for an event can readily transfer them to other patrons, without requiring the services of a broker or the like. In this system, physical tickets are not required. Rather, all of the rights associated with a ticket, such as entry into the venue, parking privileges, designated seating, etc., are stored in an electronic form. An electronic venue entry control system verifies that a person owns an electronic ticket property right, and authorizes the privileges associated with the ticket, such as access to parking facilities, entry to the venue, purchase of concessions and/or merchandise, and the like. A seating system is employed to determine an optimal seating configuration based upon patron-specific preferences, after the initial sale of tickets and prior to entry into the venue. The specific assigned seats are indicated to the ticket holder at the time of entry. Patrons who regularly purchase tickets can join an organization associated with the ticket exchange system. All transactions carried out within the system can then be easily accomplished through a single membership number, which is permanent and unique to the member. Each such member can be provided with a suitable device which interfaces with the entry system to provide access to the venue, and parking if appropriate.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0001] The present invention is generally directed to the sale and use of tickets for entertainment events that have restricted admission, such as sporting events, theatrical performances, concerts, movies, amusement parks, and the like, and more particularly to an electronic ticket exchange system which maximizes the revenue that artists, promoters and/or entertainment venue owners can receive from events, while at the same time facilitating the ability of patrons to obtain and trade electronic tickets as desired, as well as to gain entry to entertainment events.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0002] Most entertainment events require patrons to purchase a ticket in order to gain entry into the venue at which the event is being presented. Conventionally, there are various avenues by which patrons can obtain tickets. One such avenue is to purchase them directly at the site of the venue itself, for example immediately prior to the event, at a pre-established face value. For popular events, it is desirable to purchase the tickets ahead of time, particularly if the event is likely to be sold out or preferential seating is desired. In such a situation, it may be inconvenient to travel to the venue at such an earlier time. In many cases, therefore, it is possible to obtain tickets through a ticket agent. Typically, such purchases can be made telephonically, via the Internet, or at distributed ticket sales locations that are more convenient to the potential attendees. Generally, the

ticket agent has an ongoing relationship with the event venue, by which the venue owner authorizes the ticket agent to sell and distribute paper tickets for the individual events to be held at the venue. In some cases the ticket agents handle all of the tickets for an event, whereas in other cases they may only sell excess tickets that the venue owner is not able to directly sell. In these arrangements, the ticket agent may charge the patron a handling and/or distribution fee.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0003] The third avenue for the patron is to obtain tickets through a third-party broker who purchases a number of tickets, usually for popular events, and resells them to the patrons. Quite often, the tickets are resold at a price which is significantly above the face value of the tickets. Typically, a broker may bundle the ticket with travel arrangements, memorabilia, etc., to justify the increased price of the total package provided to the buyer. All of the profit that results from selling the tickets at a higher value remains with the broker; none of it flows back to the venue owner.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0004] As a fourth mechanism, individuals may buy tickets from the original purchasers, and resell them to others at a significantly higher price. These individuals are sometimes known as "scalpers". Again, all of the profit from the higher price remains with the scalper, rather than flowing back to the venue owner, promoter or artist. These activities are usually illegal, and can be found almost anywhere.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0006] In the conventional arrangement, one physical ticket, e.g., a paper ticket, is generated for each available seat at a venue, and each attendee is required to present a ticket to gain entrance to the venue. This requirement for physical possession of tickets places a restriction on the patron's ability to freely exchange tickets, particularly as the time of the event draws near. Typically, if a purchaser of a ticket is unable to attend the event, he or she may attempt to sell it or give it to an acquaintance, broker or scalper. In some cases, the purchaser may attempt to dispose of the ticket through an online auction site. However, this procedure has time constraints, since the seller must be able to physically deliver the ticket to the purchaser in time for it to be received prior to the event. Often, the purchaser is left with the option of simply forfeiting the cost of the ticket, or reselling it to a broker, usually at a substantial discount to its fair market value.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0007] It is an objective of the present invention to provide a system for the sale, exchange and use of tickets which enables a venue owner to maximize the potential revenue that can be achieved with each event. Furthermore, it is desirable to provide a system which can forego with the need for physical bearer-type tickets, and thereby facilitate the patron's ability to more easily exchange tickets.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0008] In accordance with the present invention, these objectives are achieved by means of an electronic ticket exchange system by which venue owners can sell tickets to patrons at a fair market value for each event, and the patrons can more easily trade and transfer the tickets among one another after they have been purchased. Tickets for an event are initially offered to the public, typically by the venue owner, using a market-making system. In this system, patrons submit bids over a limited time period, for seats of different quality. Once the limited bidding period expires, an initial price is established for each quality of seat, on the basis of the submitted bids and an econometric model that takes into account certain constraints and other factors. The tickets are then sold to the public at that price. Thus, the owner is able to establish a fair-market value for each

quality of seat at each event, rather than being locked into a pricing structure that may not optimize profits for the owner.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0009] Another feature of the invention is a trading system which provides for a secondary market in which patrons who have purchased tickets for an event can readily sell them to other patrons, without requiring the services of a broker or the like. The ability to freely exchange tickets is facilitated by a further feature of the invention which dispenses with the need for physical tickets. In accordance with this aspect of the invention, all of the rights associated with a ticket, such as entry into the venue, parking privileges, designated seating, can be stored in an electronic form. Hence, all trading can be performed electronically, using various methods, without the need to exchange any physical material between the buyer and the seller.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0011] In a preferred implementation of the invention, patrons who regularly purchase tickets become members of an organization associated with the ticket exchange system. All transactions carried out within the system can then be easily accomplished through a single membership number, which is permanent and unique to the member. Each such member can be provided with a contactless card, or suitable mechanism which interfaces with the entry system to provide access to the venue, and parking if appropriate. Examples of such include key fobs, PDAs, cellular telephones, and other such devices which can store and transmit the unique member identification. The identification device can also be used to make purchases of merchandise, concessions, parking and the like at the venue. Members can also be provided with electronic notification of the availability of tickets and current market prices for them.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0012] Among the advantages offered by the invention, venue owners can obtain a true "market value" for tickets, rather than be forced to guess at a reasonable face value. Furthermore, the ability to trade tickets on a secondary market results in selling attendance, rather than seats, providing a higher yield of the venue, along with increased convenience and liquidity for the patrons. The electronic notification services further enhances the likelihood that available tickets will be sold. The venue owner is able to obtain and track information regarding patron bidding, purchases and trading. The identification device enables additional information to be obtained that contribute to more efficient marketing, sales and inventory management, such as concession and merchandise sales.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0013] These and other features and advantages of the invention are described in detail hereinafter, with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph:

[0015] FIG. 2 is a general block diagram of the major components of an electronic ticket exchange system in accordance with the present invention;

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph:

[0018] FIGS. 5-8 are flowcharts of operations which occur with the electronic ticket exchange system.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0019] The present invention comprises an electronic ticket exchange system that can be employed in connection with any type of entertainment event in which proof of entitlement to entry, such as a ticket or the like, must be given to provide a

patron with access to the event. To facilitate an understanding of the principles which underlie the invention, it will be described hereinafter with occasional reference to its application in the context of particular examples of entertainment, such as sporting events. It will be appreciated, however, that the practical applications of the invention are not limited to these specific examples. Rather, its general applicability to all types of entertainment events and venues will be apparent from an understanding of the following description. For instance, various features of the invention can be employed in the context of musical concerts and other live performances, movie theaters, amusement parks, and other situations in which access is to be limited to those who have purchased a ticket-or can otherwise demonstrate entitlement to attend.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0022] The patrons 4 are those people who purchase tickets in order to observe, enjoy and participate in the entertainment being provided. The patrons can be individuals, corporations, traders and the like. They could also be any one or more of the artist, venue owner and promoter themselves, who may distribute the tickets as gifts or promotional offers.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0023] Ticket agents 5 are third parties whom the venue owners engage to sell and distribute tickets to entertainment events, in lieu of, or in addition to, directly selling the tickets themselves. Brokers and scalpers 6 are third-party traders who purchase tickets, primarily for popular events, and resell them to patrons at prices that are typically greater than, but sometimes less than, the face value of the tickets. The brokers can be small-scale businesses, such as ticket broker agencies, or individuals. Scalpers are typically individuals. The brokers and scalpers may obtain the tickets directly from the venue, or from ticket agents, or from patrons.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0024] In accordance with the present invention, an electronic ticket exchange system replaces the functions of the ticket agents 5 and brokers 6, and offers added value to the venue owner and the patron. The electronic ticket exchange system is typically sponsored by the venue owners. The basic components of the electronic ticket exchange system are illustrated in the block diagram of FIG. 2. The electronic ticket exchange system includes a patron interface 10 by which patrons can purchase tickets for desired events, as well as trade purchased tickets with other patrons. A patron's access to the system can be obtained by a variety of different means. For example, the patron can interact with the system by means of the Internet, using any suitable form of communication for connection to the Internet, such as a standard web browser, PDA, Internet appliance, etc. For this purpose, the interface is supported by web servers 12 for transmitting the appropriate HTML pages, or the like, to permit the patron to view information regarding available events and enter requests for tickets. To accommodate patrons who access the internet via cellular phones or other wireless devices, the web servers can include one or more servers 13 which support wireless communication technologies, such as the wireless access protocol (WAP), Bluetooth, IEEE 802.11B, iMode, HiperLAN (European) RF, etc. Alternatively, the patron can perform these operations by means of a telephone system 14 or an interactive television system 15 which also forms part of the patron interface 10. In a telephone system access, the patron might speak to a live operator, or use an automated menu system to obtain information and enter requests. As a further component, the patron interface might include several walk-up kiosks 16 at distributed locations, for example in shopping malls, retail outlets, convenience stores, and the like. Such kiosks can also be located at the site of the venue itself, for direct access by the patrons or operation by ticket sales personnel at the venue's box office. Alternatively, the venue box office can sell and trade tickets via a web browser or similar such interface.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0025] The patron interface 10 enables the patron to perform a number of fundamental types of operations, such as (1) to obtain information about events at one or more venues affiliated with the system, (2) bid upon and/or purchase tickets to desired events, (3) exchange tickets among multiple patrons, and (4) schedule notification alerts. In addition, the patrons may be able to order merchandise and other goods, link to related sites, etc. Information regarding the events that are scheduled for the affiliated venues is stored in a venue/event database 18. When a patron first accesses the system via the interface 10, a list or menu of the affiliated venues or events can be provided, to permit the patron to make a selection. Preferably, the views presented by the interface are customizable, so that the patron can view all venues and then select a specific event, or view all events and then select an appropriate venue. Seating maps 20 for the affiliated venues are stored in conjunction with the database 18. Once the user has selected a particular venue and event, the appropriate seating map can be displayed to permit the patron to assess the relevant information for various categories of seating quality, when either the Internet access or the walk-up kiosks are employed. In the case of telephone access, the seating map can be displayed to the telephone operator.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0027] The payment system 24 processes all of the monetary transactions which occur within the ticket exchange system. When a need to confirm a request to purchase tickets occurs, the price of the tickets is forwarded to the payment system 24, where it is debited against the form of payment which has been established by the patron, e.g. credit card, debit card, cash balance on deposit, designated checking account, etc. If desirable, the payment system can ensure that the proper funds are available and confirm that fact to a central server 26 before the transaction is completed.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0028] The payment system 24 can also be used to facilitate other types of purchases by the patron. As described previously, the patrons who access the ticket exchange system can be members of an organization. Their membership can be indicated by means of a membership card or a token which serves as an identification device. The membership identification device can take any of a variety of forms, and preferably is one which is capable of electronically, optically or magnetically storing a membership identifier, e.g. a number, alphanumeric string, or code, and transferring that identifier to a transaction device, through either physical contact or in a contactless manner. Examples of suitable identification devices include smart cards, magnetic stripe memory cards, RFID devices such as key fobs, tags, watches, etc., barcoded tags and the like, personal digital assistants (PDAs), wireless telephones, and biometric features. Whenever the member makes a purchase at the venue, the identification device can be used to debit the member's account via the payment system, in lieu of cash. Thus, the identification device can be used to pay for parking at the venue, as well as purchase concessions, services and merchandise while attending an event.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0032] In addition to purchasing behavior, other information can be collected and analyzed to improve the services offered through the ticket exchange system. Examples of such information include bids for initial purchase of tickets, bids for subsequent trades involving tickets, utilization of parking facilities, etc. Similarly, the patrons may use their membership identification to effect purchases away from the site of the venue itself, such as buying team apparel from a team-sponsored Internet site. In essence, any transaction that takes place in connection with the membership number via any medium can be collected and tracked for subsequent data mining.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0033] One of the principle advantages of the electronic ticket exchange system of the present invention is the fact that physical tickets are not required to gain entry into the entertainment venue. Rather, the patron's purchase of a ticket is electronically stored in the system, e.g. in the databases 18 and/or 22, and identifies the patron's right to enter the venue for a specific event. To this end, another component of the ticket exchange system is an entry system 38 located at each affiliated venue. Upon arrival at the venue, the patrons need only present suitable forms of identification which confirm that they are the persons having electronic tickets registered in the system. In the preferred implementation of the invention in which the patrons possess membership identification devices, those devices can be used to gain entry to the venue, as well as make purchases as described previously. Hence, a single membership identification device can be reused at all of the venues which are affiliated with the electronic ticket exchange system.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0041] At a suitable time thereafter, a seating system 48 determines an optimal seating configuration for all of the tickets which have been purchased up to that point. This determination takes place on a continual basis, and is updated to reflect the trading of tickets and new patron preferences. The seating system can have the capability to optimize and assign seating for all types of tickets, including season tickets, luxury boxes, permanent seat licenses, subscription tickets and general admission tickets. For general admission types of seating, the specific seat assignments might not be determined until just before the doors or gates are opened for admission, to provide the greatest optimization. However, for other, more specialized types of seating, such as season tickets, luxury boxes, permanent seat licenses, subscription tickets, etc., it may be preferable to assign the seats at an earlier time in the process, e.g., when a bid is accepted and confirmed for the initial purchase of tickets.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0044] In the embodiments of the invention where a ticket is held in the system in electronic form, rather than requiring physical possession of tickets, the ability to more freely exchange tickets among patrons is enhanced. More generally, the system of the present invention facilitates the establishment of an open market for tickets, which enables their prices to be matched to the intrinsic value of the underlying event, in addition to fostering their transferability. In essence, the tickets can be bought and sold in a manner similar to the initial sale and subsequent trading of securities. The initial sale of the tickets, or initial offering, is conducted by the venue owner. Subsequent trading of the tickets takes place among the patrons, in a secondary market that is endorsed by the venue owners.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0045] A hybrid of a Dutch auction approach (the lowest bid that still qualifies) and a regular auction approach can be used to set the initial price of tickets. Such a hybrid bidding approach is likely to result in optimal revenue generation for the venue owner, and be more akin to initial and direct public offerings that occur in stock markets, for each quality of seat section. For all types of tickets, including general admission, season tickets, luxury boxes, permanent seat licenses, and the like, the patrons can submit bids for the ticket related to that event, prior to the event's occurrence. This increased access to tickets is likely to result in additional demand and an increased market for tickets and to translate into higher market values for the tickets. A pricing window can be established for patrons to submit their bids. For example, the pricing window can be two weeks in length, but can vary anywhere from one day to a month or more, in dependence upon factors such as the type of event, venue owner preferences, and patron demand. This pricing window should preferably be coordinated with the venue owner's own advertising and promotional efforts for the event. By having a pricing window for bid submissions, patron inconveniences such as long lines, difficulty in accessing

websites, and busy telephone numbers can be eliminated. The lead time and length of the window for submitting these bids can be co-determined by the ticket exchange system and the particular venue owner. Establishing a standard lead time for bid submissions is likely to provide behavioral benefits for the patrons. For example, if every venue owner requires bids to be submitted between four and six weeks prior to an event for general admission and/or eight to ten weeks prior to a season for season tickets, patrons will learn this process and become comfortable with this approach of selling tickets over time.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0047] comparable ticket selling prices for identical/similar recent events or events that are deemed to be similar, analogous to the approach used in the real estate market for providing guidance to homebuyers;

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0051] a gate of entry for a given quality of seat upon which the patron is bidding;

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0053] a list of marquee performers for each event at the particular venue. If the event is sports related, this could include an injury report and any important trade information;

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0060] In a preferred implementation, patrons submit "blind bids" during the pricing window so detailed pricing information about current bids for the event being sold will not be available to other patrons. By using a blind bid system, price gaming amongst patrons is much less likely to occur while the venue owner will be much more likely to receive the patron's best offer price, resulting in an optimal initial selling price for the tickets rather than the lowest common denominator that occurs in interactive auction approaches. Also, patrons have significantly less incentive to review their bids immediately prior to the close of the pricing window, resulting in a reduction in excessive peak period demands on the trading system since there is no minimum level bid to beat. However, some level of concise and simple real-time guidance might be provided to patrons. The optimal type and level of dynamic bidding information, such as pricing (e.g., range, etc.), volume, etc. to provide to patrons for the bidding process can be empirically determined.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0062] Once the pricing window closes, one singular selling price is determined for each quality of seat section, based upon the winning bids that were equal to or greater than the singular price all patrons in that section were willing to pay. By having one singular selling price, patrons are less likely to be upset about a purchase after it is made because everyone in their quality of seating section will have paid the same price. Those patrons who bid higher can be given higher priority with respect to their seating preferences. As long as a patron's bid is equal to or greater than the winning auction price, he or she will be guaranteed a ticket, absent any ties. If more patrons submit bids equal to the winning auction price than the number of available seats, resulting in the need to establish a tie breaker mechanism, a set of rules can be used to select the winning bidders. These rules could include: (1) timing of when the ticket was bid upon, with an earlier bid being better than later, (2) membership status of the patrons, (3) number of events purchased/traded through the system, (4) higher maximum bid levels during the initial sales period result in a higher preference, etc.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0063] A market system 50 functions to establish each event's market value and the initial price for each quality of seating section, based upon the bids that were submitted. For example, the pricing could be determined in accordance with an

econometric model that has as its primary objective to optimize the economic benefit for the venue owner (and any other parties that participate in ticket revenues, concession, and merchandise sales), while considering all of the most important and relevant tradeoffs and constraints impacting the economics for the event such as ticket revenues, concession and merchandise sales, television revenues, radio revenues, marginal costs for each additional ticket sold, etc. Once the initial ticket prices are established, and any necessary tiebreaker criteria considered, patrons who have won a bid are notified of the success of their bids and the auction winning pricing for their bids. This notification is preferably sent within a few days of the bidding window closing, and the member's account is automatically billed through the payment system 24. Also, secondary trading is allowed immediately upon final determination and, communication of the initial ticket selling price. The method for notification for each patron's winning bid can be as follows:

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0068] In addition to notifying bidders of the success or failure of their bids, the notification capabilities of the system can be used to provide other related types of information. For example, once an initial ticket price has been established, if additional tickets are still available for that category of ticket, a notification can be sent to all members to inform them of the price at which the tickets can be purchased. As a further feature, members can set up their profiles so that they only receive such notification if the established price is below a certain level or within a certain range that they select. Other types of information that can be provided to members include the opening and closing of bidding windows, and announcements that a preferred type of entertainment and/or performer will be appearing at a designated venue. Members can edit their profiles to indicate their preferences as to the types of such notifications to receive, and the medium by which they are delivered, e.g. e-mail, IM, pages, etc.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0069] Since one of the system's primary objectives is to increase attendance, and not merely sell seats, a trading system 52 allows patrons to sell, trade or otherwise transfer their tickets in a fair, efficient and fully informed manner prior to an event, in case the patron cannot attend the event and desires to sell the ticket. It is preferable for the venue owner to sell a seat and have a person in attendance at the event because the individual who attends an event is likely to enjoy the entertainment experience and thereby build loyalty, as well as purchase parking, concessions, and possibly even merchandise, versus a situation where a patron does not attend and purchases nothing other than the seat. Furthermore, getting new patrons to attend an event when a season ticket owner cannot attend is more likely to result in additional merchandise sales because the new patron will not have likely purchased the merchandise in the past.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0070] The trading system provides and facilitates a liquid and efficient market for secondary trading of tickets for events and venues. The liquidity for tickets will likely result in an additional incentive for patrons to purchase tickets to events and will likely translate into higher market value for these tickets. The secondary trading of tickets is analogous to the secondary trading that occurs for stocks, with unique identification symbols for each event (e.g., akin to a company's stock ticker); up-to-the-second posting of bid/ask spreads for each ticket for each event being sold; and a market trading system that matches various types of orders placed by sellers and buyers.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0071] The trading system 52 functions purely as a broker providing a market that allows seamless trading of tickets by matching willing and informed buyers and sellers. A separate market is preferably established for each level and type of seating that is available for an event, in the same manner as the initial bidding

process. When trades are made between patrons, the trading system communicates with the payment system 24, to appropriately debit and credit the accounts of the buying and selling patrons. Alternatively, a third-party payment system which facilitates consumer-to-consumer payments, such as PayPal.com or BillPoint.com, can be associated with the trading system to carry out the financial portion of the transaction associated with the trading of tickets.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0072] The trading system 52 may also communicate with the notification component of the system, to send notices to potential and successful buyers and sellers regarding prices and trades. The trading system can quote information such as the current bid/ask spread, the last matched trade price, etc. As a further feature, patrons can register to receive an alert message, e.g., an e-mail, page or instant message (IM), whenever the price of a designated type of seat increases or decreases to a selected level on the secondary market. For each secondary market trade that is executed, there is a bid and ask (offer) price for the trade that must eventually converge to result in a match. Analogous to stocks, the level of the bid/ask spread is dependent upon the liquidity of the tickets related to the event in question, with more liquid trading resulting in smaller spreads.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0073] The trade prices under an exchange approach where the trading system is acting as a broker result in a situation where the buyer and seller are paying the same market price, although not necessarily the same total price when fees are accounted for. The market price may be identical, yet the fees could vary for the buyer vs. the seller or be the same. For instance, a commission could be charged to both the buyer and seller for a trade that takes place at a market price, or the seller only, or the buyer only.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0074] The trading system can allow for `fill or kill` trades for certain types of tickets where all the tickets are sold to a purchaser or group of purchasers, who has an identical number of tickets to be purchased as a ticket seller, or group of sellers, is trying to sell. In other words, the sale order is not executed unless the entire block of tickets can be sold (e.g., if only a portion of the tickets can be sold, the trade does not take place). This could likely apply to season ticket holders where they are selling specific seats that can not be dynamically moved around.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0075] Patrons can place orders using terminology that is analogous to the terminology used for the stock markets. By using similar terminology to stock markets, the level of necessary patron training is significantly reduced and the likelihood of greater patron acceptance increased. Patrons have the choice of placing all kinds of orders including: market orders (sell or buy at current market price); good-till-canceled orders (sell or buy the ticket at a specified price until the trade is executed or the patron cancels the order); day limit order (sell or buy an ticket at a specified price for the duration of a specific day); stop-loss order (if the ticket's value falls to a specified level the ticket will be sold); and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0076] As another feature which is analogous to stock trading, data such as the initial and secondary market trading prices, price increases/decreases, volume and ticker symbols for the tickets traded via the electronic ticketing system can be captured and provided to news services and other similar types of services that report this type of data from stock markets. The recipients of this data could include broadcast, cable and satellite television stations, newspapers, Internet portals, quote services, IM services, etc. The data can be provided as a delayed feed, similar to stock quotes, or in real time. The delivery of the data can be in

the form of moving ticker-tape quotes on a display screen, transparent overlays on other content, borders or banners in visual presentations, text-to-voice audio messages, etc.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0077] The foregoing features of the invention provide a great deal of flexibility in the benefits associated with the sale and exchange of tickets. For instance, the benefits can be categorized across two dimensions, namely different types of electronic tickets and different types of membership. More particularly, a ticket represents a set of rights the patron obtains as a result of owning a particular type of ticket. These rights can be bundled in three different categories, standard tickets, restricted tickets, and temporary tickets.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0078] Standard tickets are fully tradable with no restrictions, and allow the owner complete control and discretion over how the ticket is ultimately used (e.g. enter the venue for the event, trade the ticket at market value, or assign the ticket). Also, standard tickets include the applicable ticket property rights that are inherent to the specific ticket purchased, as described hereinafter.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0079] Restricted tickets only provide access to an event for a patron. These restricted tickets might typically be used in the following situations: college students at college athletic events, employees of the venue or promoter, fan club members for certain entertainers, and the like. Restricted tickets can also be used for promotional give-aways, selling tickets to events where a face value or a discount to market value is desired by the entertainer/promoter, reserved tickets for certain patrons, etc. Restricted tickets allow patrons access to the event and possibly select property rights such as parking, but they do not possess any other typical ticket rights. Restricted tickets could be inhibited from being traded on the secondary ticket market.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0080] Other restrictions, as deemed necessary, could also be placed on restricted tickets. For example, since the venue owner will probably not want to provide an incentive for permanent seat license (PSL) holders to retain their seat licenses and make unjustified profits by trading their tickets on a secondary exchange, the venue owner can restrict seating license tickets so that they can only be traded at their face value, rather than at market value. Venue owners could then provide seat license holders with an option to sell their seating license back to the venue owner or continue holding their seating license and all the rights the seat license includes.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0084] ability to buy and sell any tickets for events that are traded on the system's secondary market. Sub-account tickets under a full-time member may not have these trading privileges;

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0086] all property rights (e.g., guaranteed parking, etc.) associated with the ticket the patron buys for that particular event.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0089] ability to buy and sell any tickets for events that are traded on the secondary market on a member's own account;

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0091] all property rights (e.g., guaranteed parking, etc.) associated with the type of ticket the patron buys for that particular event;

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0099] random drawing promotional activities where the patron will have the ability to win back-stage passes, meet with the entertainers/players, etc.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0103] Membership rights and privileges are distinct from ticket property rights. Ticket property rights are particular to a specific event and constitute the basic commodities that can be purchased and traded by members of the system. Tickets need not be physical in nature, they can be electronic proxies for the associated rights. Membership rights are benefits that the patron receives, and these rights can not be traded. Membership rights vary by the type of membership the patron possesses.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0105] Season tickets present a specialized case of the general situation described thus far. Whether season ticket holders have purchased a seating license or not, there is likely to be a general feeling by season ticket holders, and even venue owners, that having a season ticket entitles that individual to priority on buying a season ticket the following season, even though it is a new season. While this property right is perceived rather than actual (other than in the case of seat licenses), a value can be attributed to this right without jeopardizing the intangible goodwill this inherent right conveys to season ticket owners. If this inherent property right does not continue, existing season ticket owners might feel that the goodwill they have demonstrated for a franchise (e.g., purchased season tickets in good and bad times) has not been acknowledged or rewarded.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0106] Existing season ticket owners will likely want to be differentiated from new bidders for season tickets, rather than be considered just another person in a pool of bidders. In fact, it is likely that season ticket holders will want to be differentiated in a way that is directly beneficial to them.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0107] For those venue owners who want to provide such an inherent property right to their existing season ticket owners, the following approach can be employed. All patrons who are interested in renewing their season tickets for their current quality of seat section can be required to submit a bid during the market making process. By requiring all interested patrons (e.g. existing and new) to submit bids for season tickets, venue owners will obtain a more robust market value for the tickets. Once the market value is determined for a particular section's season tickets, existing season ticket holders from prior years who did not bid enough to meet or exceed the market value price for the tickets, but did bid enough to be within a predetermined percentage of the fair market value, would have an option (e.g. right of first refusal) to renew their season tickets at the fair market value. The existing season ticket holders have a limited period of time following the closing of the bidding window to exercise this option. By encouraging existing season ticket holders to be within a certain percentage, e.g., 20%, of the fair market value price, the existing season ticket holders will likely submit a bid that is reasonable. When an existing season ticket owner's bid is not reasonable (e.g., within 20% of the fair market value), it is probably fair to expect that the existing season ticket owner should lose this valuable inherent property right, since he or she was likely understating the bid. Conversely, those existing season ticket holders who bid at or above the market value receive their tickets automatically. If a season ticket holder does not continue to purchase a season ticket, or changes the quality of seat from the prior season, this option ceases for future seasons.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0110] As with the electronic tickets used for entry into the venue, this form of electronic ticket for parking results in increased liquidity and transferability of

ticket property rights. Once a patron enters the parking area, he or she will lose the ability to trade the ticket since a portion of the property right that is affiliated with the ticket for that particular event has been used. This property is akin to that of a ticket holder who actually enters the venue itself; once a patron enters the venue all trading privileges for the ticket cease and desist.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0111] Playoff tickets present another type of special-case. Regular season ticket holders might be upset if, at the end of a season, they are required to reenter a normal ticket pool and bid for the opportunity to attend playoff games after they have spent an entire season attending games and they are required to reenter the bidding process for purchasing tickets to playoff events. As part of a season ticket package (e.g., to give people a reason to purchase season tickets), the venue owner can provide all season ticket purchasers with the right to purchase playoff tickets (at a fixed face value or discount to market value for their particular season ticket seat--akin to conventional preprinted face values) for the team's playoff tickets for each phase of the playoffs. The face value price or level of discount to market price for each ticket could increase or decrease, respectively, with each round of the playoffs.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0112] By providing this option to purchase pre-priced playoff tickets to season ticket holders only, it allows the venue owner to significantly differentiate the season ticket package from general admission tickets. Although there is always a tradeoff between selling the option and collecting the option value and strike price vs. waiting to see if the venue owner's team makes the playoffs and selling the tickets at their actual market value, the venue owner strongly differentiates season tickets from general admission tickets by providing this property right at the beginning of the season. Also, since this option can not be split up over various games, it is a unique ticket property right for season ticket holders only.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0115] At the time a patron registers, or at any point in the future thereafter, each patron can have the ability to list the name and membership numbers of other members for whom they will typically purchase tickets or provide notification that they have extra tickets available. This can be done by the patron knowing and directly entering the other members' required information, or by providing an inquiry and search capability where the person building the list can enter certain critical information (e.g., name, address, member number, etc.) that will search the database 22 and provide a list of potential matches, allowing the patron to select the list members based upon the results of the search. Including other members on a given patron's list will only allow the owner of that list to purchase a ticket for another member, but not to sell tickets, purchase concessions, etc. All members placed on someone else's list can be notified that a certain member has included them on a list of likely persons for whom a ticket is to be purchased. For example, an e-mail, pager alert or instant message can be sent to each of the listed members when a patron selects them for inclusion on a list.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0117] If a member places an order for another member, and the member for whom the electronic ticket is being purchased has not yet approved his or her inclusion on the purchasing member's list, then the member who is placing the initial order or secondary trading order is billed for all acquired 'unapproved' electronic tickets with all property rights associated with each unapproved electronic ticket defaulting to one of the order placer's subaccount numbers. This means that all electronic tickets (order placer's electronic ticket, intended subaccount electronic tickets, and unapproved electronic ticket orders), other than properly approved list orders, will be billed to and be under the control of the member placing the order, although the property rights for each electronic ticket will be

assigned to individual member and subaccount numbers.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0120] Members are also able to create, name, and combine unlimited numbers of list members who typically purchase electronic tickets or receive notifications together. Many e-mail programs allow 'group mailings' to be predefined today. This grouping might consist of a group of family or friends that typically attend events together, a grouping of a company's favorite clients for entertainment purposes, etc. The ticket exchange system keeps a history for each list member showing how many notifications, electronic ticket purchases, electronic ticket transfers, etc. the primary member has carried out for that particular list member.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0125] Notification of electronic ticket availability can be done prior to selling or assigning electronic tickets to a notice service list member. However, assigning or selling an electronic ticket to any list member by the primary member is preferably only done by the primary member himself or herself. In other words, the system facilitates the notification service, while all transactions for electronic tickets are executed by members themselves. Members are able to prioritize the order in which their notification service list members or group of members are listed in their notification service list dialogue box. This provides each primary member with the ability to use their own criteria for ranking list members for their notification service.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0126] The overall flow of operations that occur within the electronic ticket exchange system is illustrated in FIGS. 5-8. FIG. 5 depicts the events which occur in connection with an initial ticket offering. At step 60, information regarding an upcoming event is published, and a bidding window is opened at step 62. Once the window has closed, the market system 50 determines the initial ticket prices for each level of seating at step 64. For each patron whose bid was at or above the established price, the payment system 24 debits the patron's account at step 66, and an electronic ticket token is transferred to each such patron's account. The outcome of the initial ticket offering is then communicated to the successful bidders, at step 68. If desired, data relating to the various bids and established market prices can be stored in a suitable database for subsequent analysis.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0127] FIG. 6 illustrates the operations that take place subsequent to the initial offering. At step 70, patrons initiate the sale or purchase of tickets on a secondary market made available through the trading system 52, by any of the available access mechanisms of the patron interface 10. When a match occurs, the payment system validates the buyer's ability to perform the transaction, and then appropriately credits or debits the members' accounts at step 72. The trading system 52 completes the transaction by moving the electronic ticket token(s) from the seller's account to the purchaser's account, at step 74. The market system 50 is updated at step 76, to reflect the executed trade information. Again, the data relating to the trades can be stored for future analysis and reference.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0128] FIG. 7 illustrates the operations that occur at the initiation of the event. At step 80, seating system 48 finalizes the optimal configuration for all of the tickets that have been sold at a certain point. This configuration is downloaded to the entry system server 40, at step 82. As additional tickets are sold or exchanged during this time, the entry system server is updated with the appropriate seating information. Once the venue opens its gates, patrons use their identification devices to enter the parking facilities and the access-control mechanisms, at step 84. Once a device is employed at any of these points, the member identification is transmitted via a reader to the entry server at step 86, which forwards the information to the central server 26 at step 88, to prevent any further trading of

the electronic ticket. The entry server 40 queries the patron's account to see if an electronic ticket token is present for the event, and authorizes access to the parking facilities and the venue, as appropriate. Alternatively, if the token is stored on the identification device itself, the appropriate information is read from the device. In those situations where seats are assigned, as the patron's identification device is read at the access-control mechanism 42, the seating map 20 is checked and the printer at the access-control point produces a physical seating assignment for the patron, at step 92.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0131] From the foregoing, therefore, it can be seen that the electronic ticket exchange system of the present invention offers a number of advantages to both the venue owner and the patron. Venue owners will be able to earn optimal total income yield for each event at the time tickets are sold. For popular events, laws of supply and demand will likely result in a higher market value for tickets upon initial sale, resulting in the venue owner receiving this money, not a ticket broker/scalper. Increased access and liquidity of tickets for each game and season tickets will likely result in a higher ticket market value. Season ticket holders have a liquid and market-driven alternative when they can not attend an event due to work, travel, or other personal reasons, likely resulting in their willingness to pay more for a season ticket. The same is true, but to a lesser extent, for general admission tickets.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0135] The system also provides increased venue yield management for both popular and less popular entertainment events. Due to the fact that the venue owner is selling attendance, rather than merely selling seats, the venue owner should experience increased economic benefits from additional patrons attending events and paying for parking, concessions, merchandise, and the like. The venue owner will have more leverage with merchandise and concession vendors due to increased yield management of venues. More people are likely to attend an event due to a more efficient (information and transaction cost) secondary market for tickets. In addition, the nuisance effect from physical ticket scalpers is eliminated.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0136] Of course, the bidding process is likely to result in a significant variation in ticket prices for different events, depending upon their relative popularities. In contrast to conventional fixed-price ticketing arrangements, this variation could produce fluctuations in revenue flows for the venue, which cannot be accurately forecast. As a means to better manage cash flow in such a situation, the venue owner may want to purchase insurance or other types of financial hedging instruments which provide the ability to swap a variable income stream for one that is fixed. Hence, the venue owner has the option to assume all of the risk and reward associated with the bidding process, hedge part of the uncertainty, or insure against all of the uncertainty.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0137] Another financial mechanism that can be employed is the ability to securitize a portion of the revenues that will be earned from future ticket sales, either through the bidding process or in a fixed-price format. By selling rights in revenue from future ticket sales to a third party, the venue owner can realize a portion of that income at an earlier time.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0138] Patrons of entertainment at venues experience benefits as well. For instance, patrons can buy/sell/trade tickets for any event on a worldwide ticket exchange, resulting in complete information and an efficient market. Price gouging or limited information will no longer exist. At all times, every patron knows that they only have to pay a fair market value for any ticket to any entertainment event. Certain events will be more affordable for patrons to attend, expanding

access to live entertainment events to the general population. Membership loyalty benefits will transfer across entertainment events and venues.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0140] Patrons will have the ability to place bids for any season ticket for any quality of seating section. As long as the patron is willing to pay a fair market value for their season ticket, the patron can always improve upon existing season ticket seating quality. Timing of bids can be casual, since they can be changed prior to final submission, and they can be entered over a period of time, eliminating the hassles of queuing. Increased liquidity for entertainment event tickets results, since the telephone and internet will provide anyone with the opportunity to buy/sell/trade tickets for any entertainment event, without geographic constraints. The process for purchasing tickets goes from a very arduous process of waiting in queues, rapid dialing telephones, and frustration at selection to one of complete access and excitement.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0141] Increased liquidity of tickets adds convenience to both event and season ticket holders, in that they are able to sell or assign a ticket in the future if necessary (e.g., can not attend due to other commitments, work, etc.). This additional convenience will increase the patron's likelihood of bidding for certain events and providing a fuller assessment of their perceived market value for the event. Specific patron preferences can be acknowledged through venue and third-party direct marketing efforts if the patron desires.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0143] It will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that the present invention can be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics thereof. For instance, in a preferred implementation of the invention, all of the various components described herein are integrated into a comprehensive electronic ticket exchange system. However, individual aspects of the system can be selectively employed without using other features described herein. For example, the market-making mechanism can be employed in conjunction with a paper ticket system, to establish an initial sale price for the tickets that enables the venue owner to receive the true market value for the tickets. Thereafter, the paper tickets can be handled in a conventional manner. In another implementation, electronic tickets can be sold at a pre-established face value, i.e. without initial bidding, and thereafter traded on a secondary market. Similarly, the dynamic seat assignment can be an optional feature. For instance, seats can be assigned at the time the tickets are purchased, e.g. upon notification that an initial bid was successful, rather than await an optimal configuration at a time closer to the start of the event. Other variations of the features of the system will also be apparent.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0144] Furthermore, in a preferred implementation, the electronic ticket exchange system of the present invention is employed in connection with all of the tickets for every event at a venue. In some cases, however, it may be preferable to employ the system in a selective manner. For instance, tickets may be sold and exchanged through the system for certain events, e.g. special, non-recurring events such as concerts, shows, etc., but not for other, more regular events. In another implementation, the features of the system can be selectively used for certain qualities of seating, such as season tickets and suites, while using more conventional ticketing approaches for general admission tickets. Alternatively, the system might be employed for only those tickets which are not sold by the venue's box office. Other variations in the implementation of the invention are also possible.

CLAIMS:

1. A system for the sale and exchange of tickets for entertainment events, comprising: a market-making system which establishes a price for entertainment event tickets based upon bids submitted by patrons; a patron interface via which patrons can submit bids for event tickets and purchase electronic tickets for entertainment events; a storage system for storing information regarding electronic tickets purchased by patrons; a trading system via which patrons having electronic tickets stored in said storage system can transfer the electronic tickets to other patrons; and an entry system which is responsive to the presentation of information pertaining to a patron to determine whether that patron is an owner of an electronic ticket for a given event, and to permit those patrons who are owners of electronic tickets to enter the venue at which the event is being presented.

6. The system of claim 5 wherein said payment system automatically credits and debits said payment accounts, as appropriate, for transfers of tickets carried out via said trading system.

13. A system for the sale and exchange of tickets for entertainment events, comprising: a patron interface via which patrons can purchase electronic tickets for entertainment events; a storage system for storing information regarding electronic tickets purchased by patrons; a trading system via which patrons having electronic tickets stored in said storage system can transfer the electronic tickets to other patrons; a seating system which determines an allocation of seats at said venue for electronic tickets for the event; and an entry system which is responsive to the presentation of information pertaining to a patron to determine whether that patron is an owner of an electronic ticket for a given event, and to permit those patrons who are owners of electronic tickets to enter the venue at which the event is being presented.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein said payment system automatically credits and debits said payment accounts, as appropriate for transfers of tickets carried out via said trading system.

23. The system of claim 13 wherein a venue contains plural levels of seating quality, and said trading system establishes a respective market for each level of seating quality.

24. A system for the sale and exchange of tickets for entertainment events, comprising: a patron interface via which patrons can purchase electronic tickets for entertainment events; a storage system for storing information regarding electronic tickets purchased by patrons; a trading system via which patrons having electronic tickets stored in said storage system can transfer the electronic tickets to other patrons; a payment system which stores information regarding payment accounts of patrons and automatically debits and credits said accounts for purchases and trades of electronic tickets made by patrons; and an entry system which is responsive to the presentation of information pertaining to a patron to determine whether that patron is an owner of an electronic ticket for a given event, and to permit those patrons who are owners of electronic tickets to enter the venue at which the event is being presented.

33. The system of claim 24 wherein a venue contains plural levels of seating quality, and said trading system establishes a respective market for each level of seating quality.

35. The system of claim 34 further including a trading system via which patrons who have purchased tickets can transfer the tickets to other patrons.

37. The system of claim 36 wherein said payment system automatically credits and debits said payment accounts, as appropriate, for transfers of tickets carried out via said trading system.

51. The system of claim 1 wherein said trading system provides for direct patron-to-patron payments for the sale of a ticket from one patron to another.

54. The system of claim 52 wherein said market-making system provides season ticket holders with the right to purchase playoff tickets at a fixed price value, without bidding.

65. The system of claim 13 wherein said trading system provides for direct patron-to-patron payments for the sale of a ticket from one patron to another.

68. The system of claim 66 wherein said market-making system provides season ticket holders with the right to purchase playoff tickets at a fixed price value, without bidding.

76. The system of claim 74 wherein said market-making system provides season ticket holders with the right to purchase playoff tickets at a fixed price value, without bidding.

82. The system of claim 81 wherein said storage system stores information in connection with a first patron that associates said first patron with a given token, and said trading system transfers said information from said first patron to a second patron when said first patron trades the electronic ticket to the second patron.

83. The system of claim 81 wherein said token identifies the patron who purchased the electronic ticket, and said trading system cancels said token and creates a new token that identifies a second patron when the electronic ticket is transferred to said second patron.

86. The system of claim 12 or 38, wherein said trading system provides a respective market for each level of seating quality.

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L16: Entry 4 of 4

File: PGPB

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TITLE: Methods and apparatus for providing tickets from gaming devices and/or lottery terminals which are not dependent on a player's success on the underlying game

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REPRESENTATIVE-FIGURES: 1

ABSTRACT:

Gaming devices dispense tickets which are unrelated to a player's success on a particular game played on a gaming device or to the player's credits on a credit meter or other "cash out" indicator. The gaming devices provide gaming awards and also provide tickets. Other methods provide tickets during the play of wagering games. Still other embodiments comprise lottery terminals which dispense tickets other than those purchased by a lottery patron or won on a purchased lottery ticket.

RELATED APPLICATION DATA

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/157,993 filed Sep. 22, 1998, and now U.S. Pat. No. 6,113,098.

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DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20030157979 A1

TITLE: Methods and apparatus for providing tickets from gaming devices and/or lottery terminals which are not dependent on a player's success on the underlying game

Abstract Paragraph:

Gaming devices dispense tickets which are unrelated to a player's success on a particular game played on a gaming device or to the player's credits on a credit meter or other "cash out" indicator. The gaming devices provide gaming awards and also provide tickets. Other methods provide tickets during the play of wagering games. Still other embodiments comprise lottery terminals which dispense tickets other than those purchased by a lottery patron or won on a purchased lottery ticket.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0002] The present invention relates to methods and apparatus for providing tickets from games of chance, such as gaming devices and from lottery terminals.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0010] Other embodiments of the present invention relate to methods of conducting games of chance wherein tickets to a future drawing are provided. As used herein, the term "drawing" is meant broadly to include lotteries, sweepstakes, and other random selections, wherein one or more winning indicia are randomly selected from a plurality of such indicia. Other methods comprise providing tickets for play on that game or another game in conjunction with the tickets to a drawing.

Summary of Invention Paragraph:

[0012] Other embodiments of the present invention comprise lottery terminals which dispense tickets other than the purchased tickets and based on criteria unrelated to the lottery patron's success from a purchased ticket.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph:BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGSBrief Description of Drawings Paragraph:

[0019] FIG. 6 illustrates an embodiment of the present invention on a lottery terminal.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0034] According to one preferred embodiment of the present invention, a gaming device prints a ticket which provides eligibility for a drawing as well as at least one free play after a predetermined time period. If the drawing is run with one or more numbers, the numbers can be chosen by the gaming device, by a host computer, or by a player through input controls such as a keypad or touch screen at the gaming device. The drawing can be conducted by the gaming establishment, by entry into a traditional government-run lottery, or through a third party drawing. Entry to the drawing can be exclusively via the gaming devices or may also be permitted by individuals through the purchase of drawing tickets, as in the case of a

traditional government lottery. According to this embodiment of the present invention, the ticket is preferably coded, for example, with a secure random number which serves as entry into a drawing. For example, the drawing can be conducted by one or more gaming establishments at predetermined times, e.g., monthly. The dispensed ticket also advantageously provides a player with one or more credits on the gaming device which dispensed the ticket, on some other gaming device(s), on a number of predetermined gaming devices. Advantageously, the drawing feature and the ability to obtain game credits utilizing one of these dispensed tickets only becomes valid after a predetermined time period. For example, a gaming device may dispense tickets during one particular week which provides a player with game credits or at some future time and eligibility in a drawing which is conducted at a different future time. Alternatively, the future game credits and the drawing eligibility can be at the same time. Therefore, the patron can return to the games which incorporate this feature some predetermined time after the ticket was dispensed, insert the ticket into the gaming device and receive notification of his/her status regarding the drawing as well as credits on the gaming device for one or more free plays. Awards won from one of the disclosed drawings can be paid directly to the player or can be issued as credits to the gaming machine, or some combination, for example, lower tier awards provided at the gaming device while higher tier cash prizes only pay directly to a player. This embodiment of the present invention encourages return play and customer loyalty and provides a player with at least one additional chance of winning even after the player ends his/her current play session. This embodiment of the present invention also permits a gaming establishment to offer a relatively large, lottery-styled jackpot to a player. The manner in which a player is notified of the drawing outcome can be accomplished visually, audibly, with a gaming device on a leader board, or at some location remote from the gaming device, but most preferably within a participating gaming establishment. The drawing status indication is most preferably provided to the player on the gaming device which also offers the player one or more free plays. In this manner, a player can be introduced to new gaming devices. The tickets of this embodiment of the present invention can also be provided with an expiration. Thereby, a player may be provided with a specific time window for obtaining entry into the drawing or for free play credit.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0035] According to this preferred embodiment of the present invention, a player may not be guaranteed that the winning numbers drawn for any specific period will produce a winner from the group of tickets dispensed for that particular drawing. If there is no winner, the jackpot preferably rolls over into a subsequent drawing. For example, if the drawing is determined by randomly selecting a single number from the numbers 1-10,000 for a drawing during the first week of September, yet only 1,500 tickets are dispensed containing entries to this particular drawing, then the winning number may not have been dispensed and the drawing will either end without a winner and/or the jackpot will be rolled over into the subsequent drawing, for example, a drawing during the second week of September. The tickets of the present invention will also preferably have a printed time period during which a winning drawing ticket must be redeemed. For example, for a drawing during the first week of September, a player may be required to redeem a winning ticket during the month of September. Any other time periods can be set as desired.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0036] It is also within the scope of this aspect of the present invention to provide a player with game credits on a gaming device at the same times, different times, or overlapping times as the drawing feature. For example, for a drawing during the first week of September, a player can be provided with game credits on specified gaming devices during the first two weeks of September or during any time during the months of September or October, or, alternatively, only during the month of October. In the latter case, a player is encouraged to return to the particular gaming establishment during September to determine the player's status with respect to the drawing and again in October to receive free plays on the gaming device.

Most preferably, the game credits become valid after the drawing in order to encourage a player to return to a gaming device. The free plays may simply be some number of credits which are either real or promotional. In the case of real credits, a player can cash out the credits for money while promotional credits may only be used for play on a gaming device and cannot be cashed out.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0038] According to this embodiment of the present invention, a gaming device is provided with suitable printers, controls and communication software in order to permit the desired control, monitoring and validation of dispensed tickets by the gaming establishment or other entity responsible for the supervision and/or control of the tickets. One preferred ticket of this embodiment of the present invention will include information indicating the valid time window for the free play credit and a number or numbers associated with a valid entry into the drawing and may also include promotional descriptions, disclaimers, expiration date, issue date, machine number, location identifier, and a bar code for validation purposes.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0039] A somewhat simpler embodiment of the present invention comprises a gaming device and method for playing a game wherein the gaming device dispenses a drawing ticket comprising one or more sets of numbers or other indicia. According to this embodiment of the present invention, a drawing is held periodically and prizes are awarded to players holding winning tickets. The top prize of the drawing may be a fixed prize or a progressive prize based upon the total amounts wagered on participating gaming devices. This feature can also have time limits such as those discussed with other embodiments.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0040] While various preferred embodiments of the present invention comprise dispensing tickets from gaming devices such as reel slot machines and video gaming devices, according to other embodiments of the present invention, tickets for drawings, game credits or free plays are dispensed during the play of wagering games commonly played on tables such as table card games, dice games, roulette, baccarat, etc. According to these embodiments of the present invention, the tickets can provide free credits or free plays on the game at which the ticket is dispensed or at some other game, most preferably only becoming valid after some predetermined period of time. Alternatively and/or additionally, these tickets provide eligibility for a drawing.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0042] According to a still further embodiment of the present invention, a gaming device issues a ticket which is not itself a drawing ticket but which is redeemable for a drawing ticket. According to this embodiment of the present invention, a player takes the dispensed ticket to either a booth wherein personnel issue the drawing ticket or to a central ticket dispenser which is capable of reading the ticket dispensed from the gaming device, confirming that the dispensed ticket is valid and then issuing a drawing ticket to the player.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0043] Thus, some embodiments of the present invention comprise providing tickets valid for free play, real credits or promotional credits on a gaming device after some predetermined period of time. As used herein, when a ticket is said to be redeemable or valid only "after some predetermined period of time", that length of time can be fixed in terms of hours, days, weeks, etc. or can simply be the length of time from the dispensing of the ticket to some future time or future event, e.g., a drawing. The free play or credits can be useful on the same gaming device which dispensed the tickets or at some other gaming device for promotional purposes, such as a new game which has recently been introduced.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0045] According to another aspect of the present invention, a periodic random promotion by a gaming establishment can utilize tickets dispensed at a gaming device. According to this embodiment of the present invention, a player can receive tickets for a random promotion if the player meets certain play criteria, for example, wagering a predetermined amount during a certain period of time before the random promotion drawing. For example, if a player wagers twenty dollars, the player can receive a number for a monthly drawing. By the time of the monthly drawing, a player can accumulate many tickets. This aspect of the present invention provides an easy way for a gaming establishment to dispense tickets while insuring that a player has met threshold criteria to qualify for the random promotion. The embodiments of the present invention which dispense drawing tickets are preferably of the quick-pick type, wherein the computer picks the numbers. However, it is also within the scope of the present invention to provide a player with the ability to select his or her own numbers utilizing controls at the gaming device, for example, a touch screen number selector or a key pad.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0047] As used herein, the term "gaming device" is used broadly to include all wagering games of chance, including but not limited to slot machines and table games, video games, such as video poker and video lottery gaming machines, coin games, coinless machines, and cashless machines.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0048] Certain aspects of the present invention offer the advantages of significantly increasing the possible payout of a gaming device. For example, a gaming establishment can be provided with a number of nickel slot machines or other gaming devices. These gaming devices can be provided with ticket dispensers attached to or incorporated into the cabinets of the gaming devices. The ticket dispensers will dispense promotional scratch off tickets to a player based on an event or string of events that are predetermined by the casino and controlled by another peripheral device, or by the casino's slot accounting/player tracking system. Some tickets may be redeemable for promotional items such as show tickets, dinners, rooms, etc., while other tickets may be valid for a large drawing such as a state lottery which provides a player with a chance to win many millions of dollars. According to this aspect of the present invention, a gaming establishment would incur the expense of the promotions, as well as the expense of the drawing tickets, which is typically less than one dollar per ticket. The gaming establishment can regulate the frequency with which the tickets are dispensed and thus the associated cost of the promotion. This aspect of the present invention allows a gaming establishment to offer a slot patron or other gaming device player a chance to win millions of dollars for just a single nickel bet. The denominations used are purely for illustration. From the present description, those skilled in the art will appreciate that different prizes can be provided without departing from the scope of the present invention.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0061] According to another embodiment of the present invention, a gaming system comprises multiple gaming devices wherein players can receive drawing tickets. At least one of the award categories causes the gaming machine to print a ticket which is valid in a drawing held periodically, e.g., weekly. The numbers or indicia can be selected by the gaming device in a quick-pick fashion or each gaming device can be provided with input apparatus for a player to choose his or her own numbers, for example, a touch screen or key pad. If a player is required to pick five or six numbers out of a large field of numbers, then prizes can be awarded for tickets with numbers matching three or more of the numbers drawn. The numbers may also be generated in a manner wherein they relate to the randomly determined outcome or some intermediate event of the wagering game. For example, if the game played on the gaming device comprises a spinning wheel or a Keno game, the number or numbers provided to the player may be the last number drawn on the wheel or Keno game. The drawing may also be non-numeric and can use any form of symbol. Matching all of the

numbers or other symbols can provide the player with a progressive jackpot while other prizes are predetermined, fixed values. If the jackpot is not won, it preferably carries forward to the next drawing. If duplicate entry numbers are not allowed, a suitable number-generating algorithm can be used based upon the gaming device ID or upon a configured seed number provided to the gaming device, or the gaming devices can be linked such that no duplicate sets of numbers can be generated for a given drawing. If duplicate sets of numbers are permitted, then multiple winners would split the jackpot. A jackpot can be funded by the underlying game, e.g., with a percentage of the game play monies going to fund the drawing. In addition, lower-tier prizes can be cash prizes or merchandise.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0063] According to other embodiments of the present invention, tickets are dispensed from lottery terminals. The dispensed tickets are not related to the outcome on the tickets purchased in a standard fashion by a lottery player. In the case of lottery terminals, players can randomly receive tickets when they purchase a lottery ticket. The ticket received may be lottery related, for example, a free scratch ticket or a free daily pick-3 entry. Alternatively, the dispensed ticket could be some other promotion or prize. The various aspects of the present invention can be used with both on-line lottery tickets and two instant win tickets. Thus, the tickets of the present invention are in addition to tickets purchased by a lottery player and dispensed by a lottery terminal operator and are unrelated to the outcome on the tickets purchased by the player. Nonetheless, in addition to the random distribution of tickets to lottery ticket purchasers, other criteria can be utilized for dispensing the tickets of the present invention from a lottery terminal. For example, a lottery player may be required to purchase three lottery tickets or to purchase lottery tickets of a predetermined value in order to qualify for the dispensing of these tickets. Upon qualifying, the tickets can be dispensed to qualifying lottery players either randomly or based upon some other criteria such as after a predetermined gross volume of purchases from either that particular lottery terminal, a predetermined group of lottery terminals or all lottery terminals on that particular system and/or in a geographic location. Furthermore, lottery players can be provided with an identification number or magnetically encoded card which can be swiped through or input into a lottery terminal. In this manner, a player's actual total purchases of lottery tickets within a given jurisdiction can be tracked and players can qualify for the tickets of the present invention based upon criteria such as total number of tickets purchased, total value of tickets purchased, frequency of play, frequency of playing different games, etc.

Detail Description Paragraph:

[0064] FIG. 6 is an illustration of a lottery terminal which can be used in accordance with the scope of the present invention. The lottery terminal shown in FIG. 6 comprises a keyboard 610, tiltable screen 620, ticket hopper 630, marketing display 640, bar code scanner 650, optical mark reader (OMR) 660 and magnetic strip reader 670.

CLAIMS:

17. The gaming device according to claim 1, wherein said dispensing means dispenses a game ticket redeemable for play on said gaming device and a ticket providing eligibility to a drawing.
18. The gaming device according to claim 17, wherein said drawing ticket and said game ticket are on a single ticket.
19. The gaming device according to claim 17, wherein said drawing ticket and said game ticket are on separate tickets.
20. The gaming device according to claim 1, wherein said dispensing means dispenses

tickets for a drawing.

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